

**Testimony of George Heinrichs  
President & CEO  
SCC Communications Corp.**

**before the**

**Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation  
Subcommittee on Communications  
United States Senate**

**Hearing on S. 800,  
*The Wireless Communications and Public Safety Act of 1999***

**May 12, 1999**

***Biography***  
***George Heinrichs***  
***President & CEO***  
***SCC Communications Corp.***  
***Boulder, Colorado***

George Heinrichs is co-founder, President and CEO of SCC Communications Corp., a publicly traded company. SCC is the largest and fastest growing provider of 9-1-1 services and telecommunications technology systems in North America. Based in Boulder, Colorado, SCC's products and services are currently utilized by approximately 30 wireline and wireless telecommunications carriers throughout North America. SCC's National Data Services Center (NDSC) provides critical information management and system support for the Enhanced 9-1-1 network infrastructure. Mr. Heinrichs has led SCC's growth from two employees to approximately 300 today, achieving such recognition as inclusion in the *Inc. 500* – "America's Fastest Growing Private Companies," Entrepreneur of Distinction, and the National Emergency Number Association's President's Award.

Prior to SCC, Mr. Heinrichs' career was in public safety and law enforcement. Over ten years he served in various posts including EMS technician, 9-1-1 dispatcher, and law enforcement officer, and he was actively involved in state and national advisory boards for law enforcement information systems. He left public service to start SCC and now plays a major role in improving the delivery of critical emergency telecommunications services in the United States.

Mr. Heinrichs' professional affiliations include the National Emergency Number Association, the National Sheriff's Association, the Association for Public Safety Communications Officials, the Cellular Telecommunications Industry Association, the Association for Computing Machinery, and the American Electronics Association. He also serves on the Advisory Board of the University of Colorado Center for Entrepreneurship.

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President & CEO, SCC Communications Corp.  
Summary**

SCC is the largest 9-1-1 services and technology company in North America. We have expanded from a two- person start-up in 1979 to a company that employs 300 people today.

While enhanced 9-1-1 is commonplace on the wireline side, it is currently in its infancy on the wireless side. When a person dials 9-1-1 from his wireline phone, the emergency call-taker or dispatcher receives data showing both the phone number and address where the call was placed. This is known as enhanced 9-1-1 or “E9-1-1.” Yet right now, when a person calls 9-1-1 from his wireless phone, the emergency operator receives no identifying information, such as a call back number or location.

The Federal Communications Commission has called for enhanced 9-1-1 for wireless phones. But wireless E9-1-1 is not in place yet and will not just “happen” because the FCC ordered it. This is why *S.800* is such important legislation. Not only does this bill make 9-1-1 the universal emergency number for all phones – wireline and wireless – but it also removes some of the current barriers to wireless E9-1-1 implementation. One of the major barriers the bill addresses is liability. Wireless carriers and E9-1-1 service providers must be allowed to operate under the same 9-1-1 liability standards that apply to their wireline counterparts.

More and more people rely on wireless phones for safety purposes. Over 98,000 wireless emergency calls are made every day in the United States, and Public Safety Answering Points around the country are reporting that anywhere from 25 to 33 percent of the calls they receive originate from wireless phones. With so many citizens relying on wireless 9-1-1 services, it is essential to implement wireless E9-1-1 as soon as possible. The *Wireless Communications and Public Safety Act of 1999* will help achieve that goal and thereby improve public safety and save lives.

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Good morning, Chairman Burns and members of the subcommittee. I am George Heinrichs, President and CEO of SCC Communications Corp. of Boulder, Colorado. I appreciate the opportunity to testify in favor of the *Wireless Communications and Public Safety Act of 1999*.

After spending more than ten years in the public safety profession working as an emergency medical technician, a 9-1-1 dispatcher, and a law enforcement officer, I decided to start my own company. In 1979, I co-founded SCC which is now the largest and fastest growing 9-1-1 services and technology company in North America. We have expanded from a two-person start-up to a publicly traded company employing 300 people. SCC provides products and services for approximately 30 wireless and wireline carriers and their customers throughout the United States.

For years I have played a role in the implementation of wireline enhanced 9-1-1 and have directly witnessed situations where it made the difference between life and death. While enhanced 9-1-1, or E9-1-1 for short, is now commonplace on the wireline side, it is still in its infancy on the wireless side. As many people have pointed out, when a person dials 9-1-1 from his wireline phone, the emergency call taker or dispatcher receives data showing both the phone number and address where the call was placed. This is what “enhanced” 9-1-1 *is* – information identifying the

emergency caller's number and location that is transmitted to public safety personnel instantaneously. It is information that saves lives.

Right now, E9-1-1 is not deployed for most wireless callers. Today when that same caller dials 9-1-1 on his wireless phone, the emergency operator receives no identifying information such as call back number or location. In fact, wireless emergency calls are often routed to the wrong jurisdiction. Even when the wireless 9-1-1 call goes to the right place, if there is a disruption in service or if the caller hangs up, the emergency dispatcher has no way of reconnecting with that caller. Implementing wireless E9-1-1 will correct this problem.

Industry estimates put the wireless 9-1-1 call volume at 98,000 calls per day across the United States. Public Safety Answering Points around the country report that between 25 and 33 percent of the calls they receive originate from wireless phones. And these numbers are growing every day.

Wireless E9-1-1 is a much needed public safety service. In many cases it is the lifeline between our citizens and the emergency resources they need. This is what led the FCC to its 9-1-1 rulemaking that called for the first phase of wireless E9-1-1 service by April, 1998 and fully implemented wireless E9-1-1 by October, 2001. Even though the first deadline was one year ago, less than 2 percent of the wireless subscribers in the country have the improved 9-1-1 services the FCC ordered. This is not because the technology is not available. And it is certainly not because the wireless carriers are reluctant to provide it. Wireless E9-1-1 is not happening because of

other challenges that must be overcome in order to provide these services to the public.

The major challenge I would like to discuss today is liability. Wireless carriers and E9-1-1 service providers must be allowed to operate under the same liability standards that apply to wireline phone companies and their 9-1-1 service providers. As I mentioned, my company provides 9-1-1 services to both wireline and wireless phone companies. It does not make sense that the same service I provide one company is subject to totally different standards when I provide it to another company just because the technology is not identical. It should make no difference whether the carrier is an ILEC, CLEC, or wireless. However, as the law stands now, a different standard applies to wireline and wireless carriers. S.800 corrects this problem and will provide a fair and level playing field for companies that help deliver 9-1-1 to the public.

Chairman Burns' bill will not only promote more widespread use of current emergency technologies but it will also encourage the development and implementation of new 9-1-1 technologies. These new technologies will improve public safety's ability to care for people in emergencies. I can give you an example. My company has developed a program known as "Emergency Warning and Evacuation" (EWE) which we have agreed to deploy in Boulder, Colorado. This program uses the 9-1-1 infrastructure to make outbound 9-1-1 calls to warn residents of impending danger.

In the event of a flash flood, tornado, hazardous materials spill or other threatening situation, this technology geographically identifies affected areas and makes thousands of calls per

minute which deliver appropriate warnings and instructions to residents at risk. The EWE service can be configured to deliver specific voice, TDD or fax messages and can even be programmed to deliver messages in a phone subscriber's language of choice. Where in the past we relied on simple sirens that may have confused some or left others behind, we now have technology that can be customized to warn people appropriately and direct them to safety.

Our current emergency communications infrastructure needs to catch up with our other technological advances. Thanks to science, we can now track and model a storm's path. Yet most citizens rely on their TV weatherman or decades-old sirens systems for last minute evacuation warnings.

I use EWE as an example because this outbound E9-1-1 service is only available to wireline phone users currently. Enactment of S. 800, which will help speed the implementation of wireless E9-1-1, will also help speed up our ability to include wireless subscribers in EWE and other advanced emergency services.

As you know, high technology is not developed in a vacuum. Each advancement opens a door to hundreds of new advancements. We have the technologies to build a twenty-first century emergency system that fully utilizes the best wireline and wireless technologies available. Chairman Burns' bill is key to realizing this goal.

As a former public safety and law enforcement official, I understand the importance and

the need for an end to end integrated communications system to support public safety. Time is everything in an emergency. Quick responses by public safety and law enforcement officials can mean the difference between life and death for accident and crime victims. Making 9-1-1 the universal emergency number – for every phone without regard to technology – is an important and immediate first step toward improving emergency response. A single emergency number, replacing over 20 different emergency numbers *will* save lives.

We all teach our children to dial “9-1-1” in an emergency, but then we create different emergency numbers for wireless phones. That makes no sense. How many news stories have we seen where a three or four year old saves his parent’s life by dialing 9-1-1? I have seen several. How many have we seen where a three year old knew to dial “#77” because the child could distinguish the car phone from the home phone? I doubt there are many lifesaving “#77” stories. And I happen to know of at least one tragic story that resulted because people did not know the wireless alternative to 9-1-1. Making “9-1-1” the universal number is not just smart policy; it is good common sense.

I have traveled around the world reviewing emergency telecommunications infrastructure. While we have the most advanced emergency telecommunications system I have seen, we must ensure that it continues that way. Our emergency system advancements should track with our rapid technological advancements. The bottom line here is safety. Our nation’s wireline and wireless telephone network is rapidly evolving both technically and from a business standpoint. It is a fundamental component of our national infrastructure. We depend on it every day for the



people we love and for ourselves. Instituting the universal 9-1-1 number and liability parity will enable the telecommunications industry and public safety to develop the best emergency communications system the world has ever seen. I urge you to pass S. 800.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify here today. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.